

RAILROADS AND SHIPPERS PRESENT BOTH SIDES OF NEW RATE REQUEST

(By Associated Press.)
WASHINGTON, Nov. 20.—Arguments in the eastern railroads' 15 per cent advance rate case before the interstate commerce commission closed yesterday with a statement of counsel for the roads that even if this increase is granted they soon will ask for another advance of approximately 15 per cent in class and commodity rates and 10 per cent a ton on coal and coke.

"What is the intention of the railroads," asked Commissioner McCord, "to make the sky the limit?" "As cost increases, rates must go up if we are to proceed on a sound basis," answered John S. Patterson, counsel for the roads.

With both sides agreed that the railroads' income had increased, the chief point of contention was whether the additional revenue had offset the increased cost of operation. Mr. Patterson, the only attorney speaking for the roads, said the last advance had failed by about \$20,000,000 to cover the increased expenses of the thirty-eight systems. Counsel for the shippers maintained that by use of the additional revenues and surplus the railroads would not be in worse condition than other businesses and that under such circumstances they should not expect to

impose additional burden on the shippers. Mr. Patterson replied that the roads had no desire to make money out of the war, but that they recognized industry had a great burden to bear and believed that it should be divided rather than placed on one branch of business.

Clifford Thorne, leading counsel for the shippers, said an increase in freight rates is essentially a tax and that "this is no time for an organized set of business men to ask the American people to increase their burden."

Additional demands of the railroads, he continued, are almost keeping pace with the government in "adding burdens to the people." Mr. Thorne contended that the surplus of the eastern railroads, and their operating revenues this year were ample to maintain them on a sound basis, pay a reasonable dividend and preserve their credit.

Higher rates were attacked by lumber interests through J. V. Norman, representing the Southern Hardwood Traffic association, and L. C. Boyle, representing the National Lumber Manufacturers' association. S. H. Cowan, for the National Live Stock Shippers' Protective association, also argued for a retention of present rates.

If the commission believed the advance essential to the country as a war measure, Mr. Boyle said, the lumbermen would accept it without hesitation, but both he and Mr. Norman contended that the plan proposed for the increases would disturb rate relationships because it affects through rates and would make necessary rearrangements of business built largely around advantages of freight rates.

Mr. Cowan said conditions in the cattle industry were chaotic because of droughts and feed costs and the raisers could ill-afford the advance. He added that he had talked to members of the senate regarding a possible government loan to the railroads if necessary so that rates might not be further disturbed. The plea of the roads that their credit was being impaired by lack of revenue was attacked by Mr. Norman, who declared that he did not believe credit entered into the subject. Railroad witnesses had testified, he said, that they would not borrow in competition with the government and he expressed the belief that the government should loan money to the railroads at 4 per cent providing for its return as soon after the war as possible.

NEW EXPLOSIVE LAWS ARE BEING ENFORCED BY BUREAU OF MINES

Any person in the United States found with explosives in his possession after November 15, and who does not have license issued by the federal government showing the purpose for which the explosives are to be used, will be at once arrested and fined up to \$5,000 or sent to prison for one year. If the circumstances warrant, the person may be fined \$5,000 and in addition given the one year in prison.

This is the principal clause in a war measure passed by the last congress which is now being put into effect by the bureau of mines, department of the interior, which bureau has been charged with its enforcement. Francis S. Peabody of Chicago, a well known coal operator familiar with the use of explosives, large amounts of which are used in the coal mining industry, has been appointed by Secretary of the Interior Lane to act as assistant to the director of the bureau of mines, Van H. Manning, in the enforcement of the law. Under the law, the director of the bureau is empowered to utilize the services of all United States officers and all police officers of the states, including the city police forces, county sheriffs, deputies, constables and all officers in any way charged with police duties. The police of the cities have already been organized for this work, headed by a committee of chiefs of police in the big cities, of which Major R. W. Pullman, superintendent of police of Washington, D. C., is chairman. The police are not only to look after the enforcement of the law, but are also to make thorough investigations of all dynamite outrages and fires in factories and warehouses, and to make their reports to the director of the bureau of mines.

Persons apprehended in plots to blow up factories and bridges will be turned over to the authorities for prosecution under federal or state laws. Most states have specially severe punishments for these crimes.

The penalty provided in this federal war measure is merely to cover the illegal possession of explosives. The law provides that everyone who handles explosives must have a license. The manufacturer, the importer and the exporter must have licenses issued by the bureau of mines in Washington. The seller of explosives and the purchaser of explosives must also have licenses, these to be issued generally by county clerks, or other local officers who are authorized to administer oaths.

There will be at least one licensing office in each county, and more agents will be designated if the county is sufficiently large to warrant it. If a state has laws providing for a system of licensing persons manufacturing, storing, selling or using explosives, the state officials authorized to issue such state licenses shall be designated as federal licensing agents; also city officials qualified to issue city explosives licenses will be given authority to issue federal licenses. A federal license will not relieve any person from securing license required under state laws and local ordinances.

In each state there will be appointed a state explosives inspector, who will represent the bureau of

mines in the administration of the law within the state.

Only citizens of the United States or of countries friendly to the United States and the allies may obtain licenses.

Contractors, mining companies, quarrymen and others using large quantities of explosives, which are handled by employees, may issue explosives to their employees only through those employees holding a license, called a foreman's license.

The purchaser of dynamite, in obtaining a license, must state definitely what the explosive is to be used for and will be held accountable for its use as stated and the return of any explosives that may be left.

With the strict enforcement of this law, the federal authorities hope to prevent explosives falling into the hands of evilly-disposed persons and to put a stop to all further dynamite plots.

MAY HAVE NEW MAIL ROUTE TO BRIDGEPORT

The postal department is asking for bids for carrying the mail between Minden and Bridgeport. If a bid is submitted and accepted by the postal department, it will mean that the present route between Hudson and Bridgeport will be discontinued. For many years the Bridgeport mail was carried over the Gardnerville-Wellington route, but through petition of Mono county people was changed to the present route. However, it is reported that they now desire to have the mail again carried over this route.

WASHINGTON LEARNS OF DESPERATE FIGHTING ON PIAVE RIVER LINE

(By Associated Press.)
WASHINGTON, Nov. 20.—The desperate character of the fighting between the Italians and the Austro-Germans on the Piave river is emphasized in an official cable dispatch received from Rome.

"Yesterday morning," the dispatch says, "Austrian troops attacked our positions near Pontedivale after an intense artillery fire. The positions were defended by the 54th Infantry division, composed of the Novara brigade and the third Bersaglieri brigade. Overcome by the effect

of asphyxiating gases, our soldiers at the beginning gave way to the advancing army, but later in a dashing attack our troops succeeded in pushing the Austrians back to the river after a most furious hand-to-hand engagement.

"Units of Bersaglieri also are fighting epic battles between Fagaro and San Bartolomeo, where every ravine, every hole, every obstacle is desperately contested between the enemy and the defenders and becomes the center of the most sanguinary encounters. An entire division of Austrians is participating in the battle, which is still raging.

"The Austrians have been compelled to withdraw to the river edge, where they are stubbornly fighting with the river behind them and with little hope of receiving assistance in their difficult situation.

"In this sector alone our soldiers have captured more than 500 prisoners, with twenty-two officers and considerable war materials, including many machine guns, which were immediately turned against the enemy."

BELGIAN GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE FORCED TO WORK UNDER FIRE

Belgian women and girls are being compelled to build concrete dugouts under artillery fire. This statement is made in the diary of a German soldier, who was recently captured. He was personally in charge of a large number of these unfortunate Belgians who were daily herded together and taken to a zone near the German lines to perform manual labor of the hardest kind in constant danger of death. The soldier's diary tells the story as follows:

A BIG MINE DEAL FOR ALPINE COUNTY

The most important mining deal to take place in Alpine county in recent years was closed up last week when William Sharp, engineer for the Goldfield Consolidated Mines company; C. D'Arcy, consulting engineer of the same company, and Ben Henley and Frank Favre, also members of that company, bonded the Curtz mining property in that county for a price said to be \$500,000, of which a substantial payment was made when the papers were signed up.

The new company has already taken charge and a crew of men has been put to work. It is the intention of the new owners, according to reports from Markleville, to work about twelve months this winter getting things in shape for spring, when the property will be worked on an extensive scale. The ledges carry copper, gold and silver and much development work has been done under the Curtz management.

The fact that Goldfield men have interested themselves in the mining game in this locality is hailed with delight by all. In Alpine there are numerous old properties, producers of the early days, lying idle for the want of capital to work them. With silver demanding a high price those old silver mines of Alpine county should be producing millions.

If the Curtz property proves up to even one-half of what is claimed for it, Alpine county's mining industry is destined to awaken from its Rip Van Winkle slumber of over a quarter of a century.—Gardnerville Record-Courier.

For Associated Press News read the Bonanza.

I am going to give another instance of the inefficiency of the German authorities. Since the 18th instant fifty women and young girls have been working at concrete dugouts at Leke. As Leke is in the zone of fire and was shelled no later than yesterday, this is another case in which we cannot understand the action of the authorities. If this isn't taken by way of reprisal, then it is a shameful deed on the part of Germany, which cannot be surpassed even in imagination. The civilian population of Leke was evacuated three or four weeks ago and now women and children are compelled to work at the concrete dugouts of the village. I am sure of the facts which I state, for it is my duty to take a gang of forty-seven women to Leke every morning and

bring them back in the evening. An illustration of the German disregard for the law of war and humanity can be found in an incident which occurred the other night near Houtholst forest. The British heard cries of "stretcher bearers" from Man's Land. It naturally was assumed that a wounded man was calling for help, and Red Cross bearers rushed out through the darkness to render assistance. They were shot down by German snipers, who used this ruse to entice them into the open.

There have been many other cases recently in which German snipers have shot down Red Cross workers deliberately, notwithstanding the fact that German Red Cross workers have been permitted to work unmolested.



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